

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04  
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P R 241403Z FEB 78  
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TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY RABAT  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
SECSTATE WASHDC 217

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USEEC

PARIS AND BRUSSELS FOR LABATT

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: ELAB, TS, PORG  
SUBJ: DIFFERING OATUU ATTITUDES ON TUNISIA

REF: TUNIS 1308

1. SUMMARY. OATUU SECGEN AKUMU CONFIRMED FEB 23 DIFFERING ATTITUDES WITHIN OATUU TOWARD GOT ARREST OF UGTT EX-SECRETARY GENERAL HABIB ACHOUR AND EXPECTED THESE DIFFERENCES WOULD BE DEBATED AT FEB 27-28 MEETING OF OATUU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND MARCH 2-3 MEETING OF GENERAL COUNCIL. ACCORDING AKUMU, OATUU IS NOT SENDING OBSERVER DELEGATION TO UGTT CONGRESS AS LOGICAL PERSON MUST BE AT CONFIDENTIAL

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OAU MEETING, BUT OATUU HAS TELEGRAPHED UGTT EXPLANATION OF NON-ATTENDANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF CALLED FEBRUARY 23 ON OATUU SECRETARY GENERAL DENNPQ AKUMU TO SEEK HIS VIEWS ON ISSUES RAISED REFTEL. AKUMU IS SOLE SOURCE FOR FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF OATUU INVOLVEMENT IN UGTT MATTERS.

3. ON BASIS MEDIA REPORTS OF ARREST OF UGTT EX-SECRETARY GENERAL ACHOUR, OATUU ISSUED JANUARY 29 PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING OATUU SUPPORT FOR UGTT IN ITS DISPUTE WITH GOT (COPIES OF RELEVANT OATUU STATEMENTS FOLLOW BY AIR-GRAM) AND APPEALED FOR ACHOUR'S RELEASE. PRESS RELEASE ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT AN OATUU DELEGATION, COMPOSED OF PRESIDENT AHS EL-NEFISHY AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL ABDEL RAHMAN BOUZAR WOULD VISIT TUNISIA, TO ASSESS THE SITUATION.

4. WHEN OATUU HEADQUARTERS HEARD NOTHING FROM THESE DELEGATION MEMBERS "FOR 8 TO 10 DAYS, AKUMU AND A SECOND (ARABIC SPEAKING) ASSISTANT SECGEN, ALI IBRAHIM, VISITED TUNIS FEBRUARY 7 TO 10. BEFORE LEAVING THEY PUBLICLY REAFFIRMED OATUU POSITION ANNOUNCED JAN 29 AND CONDEMNED GOT ANTI-UNION ATTITUDE. AKUMU MET WITH GOT LABAR MINISTER AND ON FEB 8 WITH PARTY DIRECTOR, ALSO NUMBER TWO TO PRESIDENT BOURGIBA (AKUMU COULD NOT RECALL THE PARTY DIRECTOR'S NAME), AND WITH PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA.

5. AKUMU, IN HIS MEETINGS WITH NOUIRA AND PARTY DIRECTOR, RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT UGTT WAS NOT BEING SUPPRESSED;

ON CONTRARY, ALL EXCEPT ACHOUR WERE BEING RELEASED,  
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UGTT BANK ACCOUNTS UNFROZEN AND ORGANIZATION ALLOWED TO OPERATE NORMALLY. GOT LEADERSHIP WAS HOLDING ACHOUR BECAUSE OF LATTER'S CHANGED ATTITUDE FOLLOWING VISIT TO LIBYA (I.E., FOR POLITICAL REASONS). IN PM NOUIRA'S VIEW, PROBLEMS WITH ACHOUR, CULMINATING IN QUICKLY-CALLED GENERAL STRIKE, BOILED DOWN TO "WHO'S IN CHARGE?" ISSUE.

6. AKUMU THEN CALLED ON UGTT INTERIM COMMITTEE AND CONCLUDED THAT ISSUE OF ARREST OF INDIVIDUAL (ACHOUR) MUST BE SEPARATED FROM ISSUE OF FUTURE OF UGTT AS INSTITUTION.

7. AKUMU ALSO SAID HE BELIEVES THAT ICFTU CONDEMNATION WAS HASTY AND THAT PRESSURES FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS COULD LEAD GOT TO "FRAME ACHOUR" AND SENTENCE HIM TO JAIL TERM. LEFT ALONE, GOT WOULD RELEASE ACHOUR, WHO WOULD THEN BE ABLE TO "NEGOTIATE HIS WAY BACK."

8. AS TO EARLIER DELEGATION, OATUU PRESIDENT EL-NEFISHY HAD ONLY MOTORED TO TUNISIA AFTER AQMU AND IBRAHIM HAD ARRIVED, WHILE BOUZAR HAD SPENT ENTIRE VISIT "IN BEACH HOTEL" WITHOUT CALLING ON GOT OFFICIALS, AND ENDED BY

SENDING "TELEGRAM TO ALGERIA" CONDEMNING AKUMU'S SUPPORT FOR ANTI-LABOR GOT LEADERS.

9. AKUMU READILY AGREED THAT BOUZAR HAD TAKEN AN OPPOSING VIEW IN PUBLIC, SUPPORTING ICFTU STANCE AND CONDEMNING AKUMU'S POSITION. THIS ISSUE, I.E., "WHETHER OATUU INTERVENTION AND HANDLING OF UGTT MATTER WAS RIGHT." IS TO BE DISCUSSED AT TWO UPCOMING OATUU MEETINGS IN ACCRA, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (FEB 27 AND 28) AND GENERAL COUNCIL (MARCH 2-3).

10. OATUU WCTL NOT SEND OBSERVER TO FEB 25-26 EXTRA-ORDINARY UGTT CONGRESS, BECAUSE "LOGICAL" OATUU OBSERVER, ALI IBRAHIM, IS ATTENDING OAU MINISTERIAL MEETING ON CONFIDENTIAL

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BUDGET IN TRIPOLI, WHERE VITAL ISSUE OF OAU FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR OATUU IS BEING DECIDED. OATUU IS NOT "BOYCOTTING" MEETING, AND HAS SENT TELEGRAM OF GREETINGS TO UGTT.

11. WE WILL FOLLOW UP AGAIN WITH OATUU LEADERSHIP FOLLOWING GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING AND REPORT OUTCOME.

12. ACCRA RECEIVED NONE OF THE MESSAGES REFERENCED IN TUNIS 1308. IF ANY BEAR DIRECTLY ON OATUU, PLEASE REPEAT THEM TO US. SMITH

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014